IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A computer network appliance, comprising:

a plurality of hot-swappable CPU modules, wherein each CPU module is a stand-alone independently-functioning computer;

~~at least one~~ a hot-swappable power module;

~~at least one~~ a hot-swappable ethernet switch module; and

~~at least one~~ a backplane board having a plurality of hot swap mating connectors,

wherein the at least one backplane board interconnects each of the CPU modules with the at least one power module and the at least one ethernet switch module, such that the at least one power module and the at least one ethernet switch module can be used as a shared resource by the plurality of CPU modules.

2. (Currently Amended) The computer network appliance of Claim 1, further comprising a chassis providing physical support for [[the]] a CPU module, the power module, the ethernet switch module and the backplane board.

3. (Original) The computer network appliance of Claim 2, wherein the chassis comprises caddies providing air flow from the front to the rear of the chassis.

4. (Currently Amended) The computer network appliance of Claim 2, wherein the chassis comprises bays and slot guides to facilitate mounting and removal of the modules and to ensure proper alignment between [[the]] hot swap connectors of the modules and the hot swap mating connectors of the backplane board.

5. (Original) The computer network appliance of Claim 1, further comprising a power connector and a data input/output connector.

6. (Original) The computer network appliance of Claim 2, wherein the modules and the chassis are free of on/off switches.

7. (Original) The computer network appliance of Claim 1, wherein each of the hot swap connectors of the modules comprises pin connections arranged in a specific pattern and includes ground pins, pre-charge power pins, power pins and signal pins.

8. (Original) The computer network appliance of Claim 7, wherein the ground pins of a hot swap connector of a module make contact with corresponding ground elements of a hot swap mating connector of the backplane board.

9. (Currently Amended) The computer network appliance of Claim 8, wherein [[the]] pre-charge power pins of the hot swap connector of the module make contact with corresponding pre-charge power elements of the hot swap mating connector of the backplane board after the ground pins have made contact.

10. (Original) The computer network appliance of Claim 9, wherein the power pins of the hot swap connector of the module make contact with corresponding power elements of the hot swap mating connector of the backplane board after the pre-charge power pins have made contact.

11. (Currently Amended) The computer network appliance of Claim 10, wherein [[the]] signal pins of the hot swap connector of the module make contact with corresponding signal elements.of the hot swap mating connector of the backplane board after the power pins have made contact.

12. (Currently Amended) The computer network appliance of Claim 1, wherein [[the]] a CPU module operates as a stand alone computer.

13. (Currently Amended) The computer network appliance of Claim 1, wherein [[the]] a CPU module comprises hardware BIOS for configuring the CPU module and instructing a network attached storage (NAS) to locate an operating system (OS) from which to boot.

14. (Currently Amended) The computer network appliance of Claim 1, wherein [[the]] a CPU module is configured to boot remotely from an OS located in an NAS, and wherein the computer network appliance is free of a local hard disk drive (HDD).

15. (Currently Amended) The computer network appliance of Claim 14, wherein [[the]] remote booting of [[the]] a CPU module allows the CPU module to run different types of operating systems.

16. (Currently Amended) The computer network appliance of Claim 14, wherein effects of [[the]] a lack of [[the]] a local HDD include increased mean time between failure (MTBF) and decreased mean time to repair (MTTR) of the computer network appliance.

17. (Currently Amended) The computer network appliance of Claim 1, wherein each of [[the]] a plurality of hot swap connectors of the modules includes an ethernet connection providing communications to all modules attached to the backplane board.

18. (Previously Presented) The computer network appliance of Claim 5, wherein the data input/output connector is a standard ethernet connector allowing heterogeneous CPU modules of differing CPU architectures mounted on a same chassis to communicate with each other.

19. (Previously Presented) A computer network appliance, comprising:

a hot-swappable CPU module;

a hot-swappable power module;

a hot-swappable ethernet switch module; and

a backplane board having a plurality of hot swap mating connectors;

wherein each of the CPU module, the power module and the ethernet switch module includes a hot swap connector for connecting with a specific hot swap mating connector of the backplane board;

wherein the ethernet switch module filters communications internal and external to the

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computer network appliance to limit collisions caused by communications traffic.

20. (Currently Amended) The computer network appliance of Claim 17, wherein [[the]] an ethernet connection is a switched fast ethernet connection.

21. (Currently Amended) The computer network appliance of Claim 17, wherein different software configurations are used in [[the]] CPU modules free of additional hardware.

22. (Original) The computer network appliance of Claim 1, wherein the power module comprises dual DC-DC converters performing direct conversion of a facility DC voltage to voltages required for normal operation in the modules.

23. (Original) The computer network appliance of Claim 22, wherein the DC-DC converters allow the modules to accept DC power directly from a battery backup source free of power inverters.

24. (Original) The computer network appliance of Claim 22, wherein effects of using the DC-DC converters in the power module include increased MTBF and decreased MTTR in the computer network appliance as compared to a similar computer network appliance using a switched power supply.

25. (Original) The computer network appliance of Claim 22, wherein the computer network appliance uses less power and generates less heat due to the use of the DC-DC converters in the power module as compared to a similar computer network appliance using a switched power supply.

26. (Currently Amended) A computer network appliance comprising:

a hot-swappable CPU module;

a hot-swappable power module;

a hot-swappable ethernet switch module; and

a backplane board having a plurality of hot swap mating connectors; and

a microcontroller module and a dedicated ethernet path, wherein the dedicated ethernet path is separate from [[the]] a switched fast ethernet connection and provides the microcontroller module with a connection to remotely poll the CPU module, the power module and the ethernet switch module;

wherein each of the CPU module, the power module and the ethernet switch module includes a hot swap connector for connecting with a specific hot swap mating connector of the backplane board.

27. (Original) The computer network appliance of Claim 26, wherein the dedicated ethernet path is an I2C bus.

28. (Currently Amended) The computer network appliance of Claim 26, wherein the microcontroller module polls the CPU module on the status of [[the]] an OS.

29. (Original) The computer network appliance of Claim 28, wherein the microcontroller module performs a remote reset of the CPU module if the OS of the CPU module is determined to be unstable or have crashed.

30. (Currently Amended) A method of mounting a plurality of hot-swappable CPU modules in a computer network appliance, wherein each CPU module is an independently-functioning stand-alone computer, each CPU module comprising a hot swap connector including ground pins, power pins and signal pins, the computer network appliance including at least one a backplane board having hot swap mating connectors, the method comprising:

connecting the ground pins of the hot swap connector of the module with corresponding ground elements of a hot swap mating connector of the backplane board;

connecting the power pins of the hot swap connector of the module with corresponding power elements of the hot swap mating connector of the backplane board after the ground pins have made contact; and

connecting the signal pins of the hot swap connector of the module with corresponding

signal elements of the hot swap mating connector of the backplane board after the power pins

have made contact;

wherein ~~at least one~~ a backplane board interconnects each of the CPU modules with the

ground elements, power elements, and signal elements, such that the ~~at least one~~ power module

and the ~~at least one~~ ethernet switch module can be used as a shared resource by the plurality of

CPU modules.

31. (Original) The method of Claim 30, wherein connecting the ground pins first and the

signal pins last reduce brown outs in the computer network appliance.

32. (Previously Presented) A method of interconnecting a plurality of hot swapping CPU

modules in a computer network appliance, wherein each CPU module is an independently-

functioning computer, comprising (1) a chassis having a plurality of bays for different modules,

(2) a backplane board having a plurality of mating connectors, (3) a power connector and (4) a

data input/output connector, the method comprising:

placing a module having a hot swap connector in a corresponding bay of the chassis; and

inserting the module into the chassis by connecting the hot swap connector with a mating

connector of the backplane board,

wherein the power connector and the data input/output connector remain connected in the

computer network appliance during mounting of the module such that the power connector and

the data input/output connector can be used as a shared resource by the plurality of CPU modules.

33. (Original) The method of Claim 32, further comprising removing the module from

the chassis by disconnecting the hot swap connector from the mating connector of the backplane

board, wherein the power connector and the data input/output connector remain connected in the

computer network appliance during removal of the module.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 30, further comprising remotely booting a CPU module in a computer network appliance, comprising:

locating an OS in an NAS to boot the CPU module; and

remotely booting the CPU module using the located OS;

wherein the computer network appliance is free of a local HDD in remotely booting the CPU module.

35. (Original) The method of Claim 34, wherein the remote booting of the CPU module allows the CPU module to run different types of operating systems.

36. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 34, wherein effects of [[the]] a lack of [[the]] a local HDD include increased MTBF and decreased MTTR of the computer network appliance.

37 - 39. (Cancelled)